



Madisonville Sgt.  
**J. Scott Gipson**

KELLY FOREMAN | PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

Born and raised in the western Kentucky town of Madisonville, Sgt. Scott Gipson and his wife, Rosalind, now are raising their three children in his hometown.

That intimacy with the community he leads has developed in Gipson a dedication to Madisonville’s citizens that runs deeper than his commitment to serve. Currently a supervisor, the 18-year veteran has worked as a dispatcher, patrolman, investigator, and hostage negotiator for the Madisonville Police Department.

**Being a detective, you work by yourself a lot.** But as a supervisor, you get to work with the guys again, an interaction I miss. I missed the roll calls and the camaraderie. I enjoy that the most. You see officers come in from a big call and you see their face, their excitement about it and they’re telling you all about it.

**We’re D Squad.** We have six on a squad and work daytime, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. You have so many personalities in patrol. Being able to deal with those personalities, making sure everybody is cohesive and comes together — that’s a challenge. You have to get to know your guys and understand them.

**The Air Force prepared me for working with people.** That’s what policing is all about. It’s not about the criminal element or the law, it’s about dealing with people whether they are victims, suspects or co-workers. In the Air Force, we dealt with people from all walks of life. Not necessarily like we do on the street, but the people we worked with were from different places, different countries and different cultures. I think it was a big help for me.

**One of the things they press in the Academy of Police Supervision that I agree with is,** ‘show your people that you care.’ Let them know, ‘I’m there for you. It may be a bad day, but I got your back.’ To me, that’s what leadership is all about. It’s not just about telling someone what to do, it’s also about showing them that they are important. I think people respond to that.

**Cram the Car was a public service project that came about after** Chief (Wade) Williams took over. He wanted each squad to come up with goals — personal and professional as well as community goals. I started talking to the guys about an innovative project called *Cram the Car*. I had seen other agencies do it with coats and other items, basically filling a car with items to be distributed. I thought it would be great if we did it around school

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supplies. A lot of these kids see us only in negative times when we deal with them, their parents, family; we want to be a positive influence.

**A guy came up to our Cram the Car site at Wal-Mart,** read our sign and said, ‘I remember being a child and going to school with nothing. I don’t have a lot now, but I’ll see what I can do.’ He came back with backpacks and notebooks and all this stuff. I turned to the guy with me and said, ‘That’s why we do this.’ Could you imagine starting school with nothing? Your first day and you’re looking around and you have nothing to start your day with? People were just so generous. It was unbelievable how much they just kept coming and giving.

**People are in need.** I don’t think it’s just because of economic times. I believe people have always been fighting to stay ahead. We have an opportunity to help them. We say protect and serve. But serving is not just about the criminal element. Serving people makes them a priority. I think when you make people a priority, they respond to you differently.

**I was 40 when I went through basic training.** I was the oldest in my class. But, I felt like one of the guys — I never feel like I’m 48 now. The academy taught me a lot of basics and some of the things you have to deal with. If anything being older gave me an advantage because I understood the structure of the academy.

**Coming into law enforcement at an older age has helped me have balance in my life.** It’s not just about being a police officer. I am a father, a brother — all those roles. I think that helps me in that when I leave, I’m not taking things home with me, not allowing them to affect my home life. I have friends in all walks of life, not just police officers. To me, that’s a big advantage.

**It’s all about priorities.** You write down your priorities and that’s what you focus on. I tell the young guys when they come in, ‘This job is not who I am; it’s what I do. It’s a part of me, but it’s not a total picture of who I am.’ You take it seriously, you want to do it well and be the best. But when it’s 2 o’clock in the afternoon and you’re with your family, they

want your attention. You shouldn’t be out here looking to see who’s driving too fast.

**I’ve been a hostage negotiator as part of the Emergency Response Team** for almost three years now. I remember getting a call while I was at Lowe’s in shorts and a t-shirt getting stuff for the yard. A guy in the parking lot with a weapon was the initial call, so that could be anything. That’s why open mindedness is important.

**He just felt like his back was up against the wall** and he didn’t have anything to live for. I got the call and went over in my Jeep in shorts and dirt all over me. But I started talking to the guy and, we’re across the parking lot basically yelling at each other. I told him, ‘Listen. They called me from Lowe’s, which is pretty important to me because I like my yard work. But they think I can help you. I came here to help you.’ I think somebody like that just wanted to know they mattered. He felt like everything was at an end; but somebody made him feel like he mattered.

**In negotiating sessions, I think positive.** I never go into it thinking, ‘This is not good.’ I always go in thinking, ‘I can do this. I just need to get them to calm down, to bring their emotions down and bring their thinking up.’ Once you bring their emotions down, then they can start thinking clearly.

**I like being part of the plan to make this department better.** We have a fantastic department, but you never want to just settle and say, ‘OK, we’re good enough.’ We always want to be better.

**We’re growing, developing, changing** — and we’re ahead of the curve. We are into community policing and intelligence-led policing. For so long, we got in our cars and said, ‘I’m 10-8’ and that was it. For eight, 10, 12 hours, we just drove around. With intelligence-led policing, it’s the difference between shooting with a shotgun or a sniper rifle. It lets us know where our areas are and what we’re doing in those areas to take out crime. It has been a BIG plus in law enforcement and definitely here in the Madisonville Police Department. 🏡

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